



Office of the President and Vice President

Hózhóójí Nahat'á Bahane'

October 2020 Edition



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Message from President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer



For Diné people, the start of the month of October is known as Ghááji', which signifies the transition of the seasons and a shift and renewable in our lives. Over the last several months, the Navajo people have demonstrated the strength and resilience of our ancestors during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been met with many challenges and adversities that have changed our daily lives, but we remain strong and full of hope for the road ahead.

With the start of Ghááji', or the new year and the separation of seasons, Nihimá Nahasdzaán (Our Mother Earth) is letting us know that it is time to prepare for the changing of the weather and seasons – this is also an opportunity for all of us to reflect on our lives and to renew our hope for ourselves, our family, and our communities. Just as we were taught by our elders to plant, harvest, and store food for the winter, Ghááji' is a time to continue planning for the days, weeks, months, and years to come.

Now is the time to prepare our homes, our families, and our homesteads for the upcoming winter season by gathering fire wood, food and water, blankets, livestock supplies, and other essential items. The COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the flu season, has created new challenges that require us to plan ahead. We have to remain mindful and remember our elders – our parents, grandparents, and others – please plan ahead to ensure they are taken care of and that they have the resources needed stay safe and healthy throughout the upcoming winter season.

With the recent rise in cluster cases in many regions of the Navajo Nation, our public health experts are urging all of us to stay

home as much as possible, to wear a mask in public, to practice social distancing, to wash your hands often, and to avoid large gatherings. It is through the advice and public health emergency orders from our health experts that we have been able to bring down the number of COVID-19 cases on the Navajo Nation, but we have to remain diligent and continue to adhere to their advice. We are very thankful to the Navajo people for their sacrifices during this pandemic. We also thank all of our front-line warriors for everything they are doing to fight for our Navajo people and to save lives during this COVID-19 pandemic.

The teachings of our elders are also key to overcoming adversities and maintaining hope and faith. Through the practice of T'áá hwó' ajít'éego, or self-reliance and self-determination, we are stronger and more capable of persevering and prospering. We have faced many challenges recently, but we must move forward with renewed hope and faith in our prayers. Ghááji' is a time for reflection, a time for reverence, a time for prayer, and a time to plan for our future, as our ancestors and elders have taught us to. May our Creator watch over all of our Diné people during the upcoming winter season and bless us with many new opportunities for the future.

Ahe'hee'



NTUA connects 243 families to electric grid and continues to make progress with water and wifi access projects with CARES Act funds

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer recently received an update report from Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, indicating that NTUA has connected 243 homes to the electric grid, upgraded 30 water wells, continues to install up to 150 water cisterns systems, and continues to make progress using CARES Act funds.

NTUA utility crews continue to work 10-hour days, weekends, and holidays to complete projects. NTUA is planning to extend electricity to 510 families, which includes over 350 families that were identified during the 2020 LIGHT UP NAVAJO II application process. In addition, NTUA continues to accept applications from residents for its residential solar program, which was allocated \$35.1 million in CARES Act funds. For more information about eligibility for the solar program, please visit www.ntua.com under CARES Act-NTUA Projects.

“NTUA is doing a great job in partnering with the Navajo Nation to expedite the right-of-way processes and other requirements to connect many homes to the electric grid. We are very grateful to all of the NTUA crews and management for moving quickly to move forward with projects that will provide more electrical power, water resources, and internet access for our communities. We are hopeful that our people will have access to electricity and water to help minimize the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are optimistic that NTUA will be able to connect electricity for well over 500 families by the end of the year,” said President Nez.

NTUA was approved to receive \$13.8 million for power line projects, \$24.7 million to increase overall electric grid capacity, \$20.9 million for cisterns systems, \$18.6 million for wastewater systems, and \$32.8 million for wireless and broadband expansion from the CARES Act funds.

“I commend NTUA for putting together a plan that leverages all of the available resources and CARES Act dollars for the benefit of the Navajo people. Their utility crews are spending many hours away from their families to help other families – that’s what we need more of, people helping other people during this pandemic to help us overcome the challenges. We look forward to seeing more progress in the weeks and months ahead,” stated Vice President Lizer.

Among numerous water projects, NTUA utility crews are in the process of replacing motors and pumps for up to 45 targeted water wells, and working with Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority to install 150 water cistern systems where there is no water available for household drinking water, and bathroom and kitchen usage. Other projects include renovations and upgrades of regional water stations, construction of several new watering points, converting off-line-wells to watering loading stations for livestock, water well renovations, replacement of exposed water lines, and more.

NTUA has also established 32 free wifi hotpots in various communities across the Navajo Nation to help students, parents, and teachers with online learning. NTUA and NTUA Choice Wireless are assessing the possibility of installing additional wifi hotspots due to increased demand and usage. NTUA is also awaiting the arrival of new materials and equipment to construct new towers in several communities.

“The families have expressed to our crews their heartfelt gratitude that electricity has finally reached their homes. It is a challenging goal which we will work hard to surpass because as we are connecting homes, more families are coming forward submitting their applications for electricity,” stated NTUA General Manager Walter Haase.

Overall, the Navajo Nation received over \$714 million in CARES Act funds: \$600 million on May 6, \$86 million on June 16, and \$27 million on June 18. Approximately \$537 million in CARES Act funds has been approved and signed into law, leaving a remaining amount of \$176 million.



Navajo Nation Business and Artisans Economic Relief Grant Program awards over \$3.7 million in CARES Act relief funds

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer are pleased to report that the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development, under the leadership of Executive Director JT Willie, has awarded over \$3.7 million in CARES Act funds from the Navajo Nation Business and Artisans Economic Relief Grant Program as of Oct. 1, to assist Navajo businesses, entrepreneurs, and Navajo artisans facing financial hardship and/or business interruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer approved \$60 million, which was part of a \$475 million CARES Act expenditure plan approved by the 24th Navajo Nation Council, for the Business and Artisans Economic Relief Grant Program. The Division of Economic Development held online seminars and is currently scheduling appointments to provide guidance and assistance with the application process.

“We commend the Division of Economic Development for moving quickly to provide much-needed financial relief opportunities for our Navajo entrepreneurs. They’ve done a great job in getting the information out to the public and providing assistance with the application process, including hosting webinars to guide applicants. We know that many businesses and artisans have dealt with the economic downturn due to the pandemic and it is not just here on the Navajo Nation, it is across the country. We encourage all business owners and artisans to take the initiative to apply for the relief funds,” said President Nez.

Navajo artisans who meet the eligibility requirements can receive up to \$5,000 for financial emergencies defined as the lack or imminent endangerment of essentials such as housing, medicine, childcare, and food. Eligible businesses can receive as much as \$10,000 to \$60,000.

“As a business owner, I understand the economic impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of keeping people employed to provide for them and their families. The program that Director JT Willie and his team have developed is a great example for our other programs and we are optimistic that many of our Navajo entrepreneurs will benefit from it and be able to move their businesses forward. I encourage all businesses out there to at least submit an application,” said Vice President Lizer.

The Division of Economic Development website includes two separate applications – one for businesses and one for Navajo artisans. There is a two-step

process, part one is the Navajo Business Certification Application and step two is the relief grant application. Applicants are required to complete their source list number in part one in order to apply for part two. All information is located at www.navajoeconomy.org. Additional information is available on the Division of Economic Development’s Facebook page, along with live webinars regarding the application process.

The following general eligibility requirements apply to all businesses applying for financial assistance under this Navajo Business Economic Relief Grant:

- Business is facing a financial hardship due to the COVID-19 public health emergency
- Business is organized for profit and at least 51% owned by an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation
- Business was in operation prior to January 1, 2020
- Business has less than 300 employees as of March 1, 2020 (for the purpose of this requirement, each individual employee, regardless of typical number of hours worked, and each owner, is considered one employee)
- Business is certified or to be certified or re-certified under the Navajo Nation Business Source List as published by the Navajo Business Regulatory Department (BRD). Website: www.navajoeconomy.org



The Navajo Nation
Division of Economic Development

Navajo CARES Act Business & Artisan Relief Grant

The Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development created a Navajo CARES Act relief grant program to assist Navajo businesses and artisans that have been faced with financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic.

STEP 1

Register your business with the Navajo Business Regulatory Department. You must be registered with the Navajo BRD in order to continue to Step 2.

STEP 2

Apply for the Navajo CARES Act Business and Artisan Economic Relief Grant when application becomes available September 7, 2020.

All information can be resourced at www.NavajoEconomy.org

Make an Appointment Today

Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development offers one-on-one support for business registration from the Navajo Business Regulatory Department and all Regional Business Development Office locations.

Contact your local Regional Business Development Office

• CHINLE RBDO	(928) 674-2240
• EASTERN RBDO	(505) 905-6400
• FT. DEFIANCE RBDO	(928) 871-6486
• SHIPROCK RBDO	(505) 368-1317
• WESTERN RBDO	(928) 283-3010

To schedule an appointment please call

(928) 871-6544

For more information regarding the Division of Economic Development or the Navajo CARES Act Business/Artisan Relief Grant, please call (928) 871-6544 or send an email to NavajoEconomy@navajo-nsn.gov.

The following general eligibility requirements apply to all artists and artisans applying for financial assistance under this Navajo Artisan Relief Grant:

- Business is certified or to be certified or re-certified under the Navajo Nation Business Source List as published by the Navajo Business Regulatory Department (BRD). Website: www.navajoeconomy.org
- Organized as an artist in a medium or discipline in art or performance
- Artist or artisan is at least 18 years of age
- Artist or artisan must be an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation
- Artist or artisan must be able to demonstrate a sustained commitment to their work, careers, and public audience for their work

- Artist or artisan is facing a financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Independently owned and operated with annual gross sales revenue of \$100,000 or less (artists or artisans who typically earn over this amount each year should look into the Navajo Business Economic Relief Grant)

“We are very happy to have successfully fulfilled some goals we set to get the program going by August and to get checks issued out by September. The team in place has been making this process all possible – Douglas Capitan, Shaunya Manus, Coby Tom,

and all our various offices from Business Regulatory to Regional Business Department Offices. Our purpose is one overall goal – to get direct relief to those financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a fellow artist and business owner, I fully understand the hardships a business can face and now with our current situation it makes it hard to sustain. It is hope that recipients will use this grant to suffice their needs and continue to prosper their businesses,” Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie stated.

Overall, the Navajo Nation received over \$714 million in CARES Act funds: \$600 million on May 6, \$86 million on June 16, and \$27 million on June 18. Ap-

proximately \$537 million in CARES Act funds has been approved and signed into law, leaving a remaining amount of \$176 million, which the Nez-Lizer Administration is proposing to use fund to directly help Navajo students, elders, families, and others impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through Legislation No. 0209-20. For more information regarding the Navajo Nation Business and Artisans Economic Relief Grant Program, please contact the Division of Economic Development at (928) 871-6544 or send an email to navajoeconomy@navajo-nsn.gov.

U.S. District Court clarifies previous rulings and orders the 2020 census count to continue through October, appeal pending in higher court

On Oct. 1, 2020, U.S. District Court Judge Lucy H. Koh of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California issued an order that clarifies the court’s previous order issued on Sept. 24, 2020, which granted Navajo Nation and co-plaintiffs’ motion for stay and preliminary injunction. Judge Koh issued the clarification after several complaints from census field-workers surfaced suggesting that the Bureau was winding down field-operations, in violation of the stay and preliminary injunction.

Federal defendants also announced on Sept. 28, 2020 that the Sept. 30, 2020 deadline for the census count remained in effect, in violation of the stay and preliminary injunction. Thursday’s order clarified that the Census Bureau is required to continue the 2020 census count through Oct. 31, 2020 and to notify all Census Bureau employees of the injunction. The U.S. Census Bureau appealed the rulings, which have yet to be decided upon by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Navajo Nation officially joined the lawsuit on Sept. 1, 2020, against the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Commerce based on the adoption of an illegally expedited plan, known as the “Replan,” which shortened the time to complete data collection for the 2020 Census by imposing a new deadline of Sept. 30, 2020. The Navajo Nation and other plaintiffs contend that federal defendants illegally curtailed time to complete the 2020 census, threatening to cause a significant undercount of minority populations, including members of the Navajo Nation.

“All Indigenous peoples have the right to be

counted in the 2020 Census. The clarification and orders from Judge Koh are a step in the right direction, but the fight for our Navajo people to be counted continues in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for all tribes to respond for the 2020 Census, especially for our people who live in remote areas without basic infrastructure. We have a strong coalition of supporters and co-plaintiffs that are fighting alongside us. I commend the work and commitment of Navajo Nation Asst. Attorney General Paul Spruhan, under the leadership of Attorney General Doreen McPaul,” said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez.

On Aug. 31, President Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer issued a proclamation recognizing the month of September 2020 as “Navajo Nation Census Month,” to encourage the Navajo people to participate in the 2020 Census to ensure a complete count of all citizens on the Navajo Nation. As of Thursday, the Navajo Nation’s response rate for the 2020 Census was only 21.7 percent.

In the month of September, the Nez-Lizer Administration partnered with Census officials to offer



Respond to the 2020 Census

The 2020 Census is your chance to shape your community’s future. You can respond online using your mobile phone, tablet, or computer, even if you haven’t received your census invitation. It’s so easy, just visit **2020census.gov** and click respond. Complete the online form, making sure you include everyone who lives with you. It only takes a few minutes.

Respond today at 2020census.gov or call 844-330-2020

Shape your future
START HERE >

United States
Census 2020

on-site information and assistance to be counted in the 2020 Census count, as President Nez and staff members distributed food and care packages in 32 communities to over 6,000 residents of the Navajo Nation.

“Getting counted for the 2020 Census is already very challenging for many households due to the lack of telecommunications infrastructure in many Navajo communities, and the COVID-19 pandemic compounded those challenges. We need adequate time to complete the 2020 Census with an accurate count,” stated Vice President Lizer.

The Nez-Lizer Administration encourages everyone to self-respond for the 2020 Census online at <https://2020census.gov>, by calling (844) 330-2020, or in-person at upcoming food and care package distribution sites.

Nation’s leaders issue Navajo Nation Breast Cancer Awareness Month proclamation

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer issued a proclamation on Oct. 1, recognizing the month of October as “Navajo Nation Breast Cancer Awareness Month” to raise awareness and promote breast cancer prevention and screenings to help fight the disease, and to support those affected by breast cancer.

“Many of us have a loved one, a relative, or a friend who is battling breast cancer. Breast Cancer Awareness month, which is recognized across the country, presents an opportunity to learn more about this deadly disease that impacts so many lives. Please help us to spread awareness and to fight the disease. Help by learning and promoting a healthier lifestyle to your family, friends, and communities. The risks associated with breast cancer can be reduced through education, screenings, and prevention efforts,” said President Nez.

The proclamation acknowledges that breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Navajo women and further states that risk factors that may increase a person’s chance of developing breast cancer include family history, age, alcohol consumption, and genetic history.


“Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a reminder to us all, men and women, that cancer can affect any of us, and that’s why it’s important to take

preventative measures, such as eating healthy, exercising regularly, and taking the time to get screened. We all want to live a long and healthy life for our loved ones,” said Vice President Lizer.

Mammography screening funding is available for Native American women from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to the Navajo Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention Program, which educates and provides cancer screenings to low income, uninsured, or underinsured age-eligible women across the Navajo Nation, while engaging the community and its partners to increase screening rates.

“October holds an extraordinary place in many of our hearts, as we remember our loved ones who battled breast cancer, and we pray for those that continue their fight. This month, I challenge everyone to learn about breast cancer and its early signs. Breast cancer has been known to grow rapidly, and the earlier it is detected, the more lives we can save,” said Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish.

The Office of the President and Vice President encourages all Navajo citizens to wear the color pink



THE NAVAJO NATION

Proclamation

**RECOGNIZING NAVAJO NATION
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH**

WHEREAS, Breast Cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Navajo women at a rate of 64.4 per 100,000 women. Making healthy lifestyle choices, including regular exercise and screenings, can help reduce the risk of developing breast cancer; and

WHEREAS, Risk Factors that may increase chances of developing breast cancer include family history, age, drinking alcohol and genetics; and

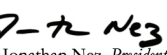
WHEREAS, Mammogram screenings, recommended for all women age 50 and over, remain the most effective way to identify breast cancer in its earliest stages; and

WHEREAS, Mammography screening funding is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to the Navajo Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention Program. This Program educates and provides cancer screening to low income, uninsured, or underinsured age eligible women across the Navajo Nation, while, engaging the community and its partners to increase screening rates; and


WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation renews its commitment to fighting this disease, raising awareness of prevention and screening, and supporting those affected by breast cancer.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JONATHAN NEZ, President of the Navajo Nation and **I, MYRON LIZER**, Vice President of the Navajo Nation do hereby proclaim October 2020 as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. We encourage our Navajo people to wear the color pink to raise awareness and to promote healthy living among our Navajo women, families, communities, and Navajo Nation. We call the people of the Navajo Nation to publicly reaffirm our Nation’s strong commitment to ending breast cancer through prevention, screening, and treatment.

PROCLAIMED THIS 1st DAY OF OCTOBER 2020



Jonathan Nez, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION



Myron Lizer, *Vice President*
THE NAVAJO NATION

during the month of October, to raise awareness and to promote healthy living among Navajo women, families, and communities.

President approves \$475 million in CARES Act funding to provide immediate COVID-19 relief funding for water projects, power line projects, and more

On Aug. 18, 2020, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer approved over \$475 million in CARES Act funding for water line projects, power line projects, solar power projects, internet access to remote areas, business assistance, and more resources to help the Navajo people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Nez-Lizer Administration approved the following funds in Resolution CJY-67-20:

- \$130 million for the Navajo Department of Water Resources for water projects, including waterline and cistern projects, water hauling,

windmill repairs, water well infrastructure, earthen dams, and irrigation projects, which ensures that the Navajo people have access to adequate and safe water to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

- \$44.2 million for powerline projects, including power line capital projects and electrical line extensions, to ensure that Navajo homes and facilities have access to electricity sufficient to comply with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 guidelines.
- \$53.2 million for telecommunication and broadband expansion projects for schools,

higher educational institutions, and public facilities, to ensure Navajo students, educators, and employees have adequate broadband access and telecommunication capacity while complying with “Safe at Home” public health orders and can communicate with public safety, healthcare, and education.

- \$35.1 million for solar projects for Navajo homes within the boundaries of the Navajo Nation to ensure that they have access to electricity to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- \$1,000 for hardship assistance to help Navajo individuals and families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ID-19 pandemic. The Nez-Lizer Administration will also propose another expenditure plan to provide more hardship assistance for Navajo families and individuals that have experienced financial burdens created by the pandemic.

- \$828,637 for parks and recreation, including vendors and others, who experienced negative economic impacts from the pandemic.
- \$42.1 million for payroll support pay expenses eligible under the U.S. Treasury guidance.
- \$24.6 million for Navajo Gaming Enterprise, who employ over 1,100 Navajo citizens, to avoid lay-offs, loss of healthcare insurance, and to sustain business operations.
- \$9.6 million for the Judicial Branch to continue court services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- \$60 million for Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development to provide recovery and assistance for Navajo businesses and entrepreneurs, who were impacted by the public health emergency.
- \$75.8 million for Navajo Department of Health to continue to provide COVID-19 related health care services, such as vaccinations, testing, alternative care services, traditional and faith based services, and others, for the Navajo people.

“In the review of the funds provided in CJY-67-20, we considered the purposes of the projects, the timeframe to complete each project, the readiness of the projects, and all the requirements necessary to carry out successful projects. Most importantly, the allocations have to comply with the federal CARES Act law and have to be expended by December 30, 2020, as required by the U.S. Treasury. The Administration had to prioritize projects and services that reflect the immediate and essential needs of our Navajo people to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Through the teachings of K’é (kinship), Nitsáhákees (thinking), Nahat’á (planning), liná (life), and Sihasin (stability of restoration of balance and harmony through reflection), we can help each other to overcome any obstacle to restore Hozhó, balance, and harmony,” said President Nez.

With the input from many experts in the field and discussions of how to refine the plan, several portions were reduced, such as the following:

- The Broadband-Telecommunications Projects were decreased by \$15,000,000 for non-tribal owned Eligible Telecommunications Carriers. The Navajo Department of Information

Technology could move immediately with a preferred carrier recommended by Navajo leadership instead of an open-ended selection process.

- The Solar Projects were reduced by \$34,103,910 appropriated to the Native Renewables company. We believe a project focused on the efforts of Native Renewables working with families in the Former Bennett Freeze Area will fit the objective of bringing power to those who are in need and meeting the timeline for spending. There will be a new proposal for the initiative.
- Striking \$23,973,000 for solid waste projects across the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Environmental Protection Agency is a regulatory agency for the Navajo Nation, and the Agency is not in the best position to carry out the solid waste projects. The funds are best delivered to the Navajo Division of Community Development, working with Navajo Chapters or regional sanitation facilities. Redirecting the funds to the Navajo Division of Community Development, working with Chapters, will meet this objective.
- Striking \$48,803,592 for payroll expenditures for the period after July 1, 2020, this includes the 4th Quarter of the Fiscal Year 2020, and from October 1 to December 30, 2020, this consists of the 1st Quarter of the Fiscal Year 2021. The Nation may consider other sources of funds for payroll for this time period while making more funds available for direct services to the Navajo People. The General Fund payroll expenditures and 638 funded business units incurred through June 30, 2020, remain in place.
- Striking \$33,423,914 for housing and housing improvement projects. The housing project gave \$1,392,663.08 to each Council Delegate district, but there are not enough funds in some Chapters to complete one house. There is doubt about completing housing projects by December 30, 2020. Therefore, a refinement on the housing funding will be undertaken and made equitable.
- Striking \$20,008,798 to address additional Administration and compliance of CARES Act funds. The Navajo Nation’s overall financial system includes other Departments who work together to process financial documents, set up federal budgets, and work with Divisions, Departments, Chapters, and contractors for requisitions and payments. We can

provide an appropriation across the financial network, so our system is adequately funded for the proper personnel, contractors, and office equipment. We recommend a provision to include the Office of the Controller, the Office of Management and Budget, and other departments of the financial system.

“The approval is a big win for the Nation. Our focus has to remain on those who need the funding the most, including our Navajo families, elders, and vulnerable individuals. Our goal is to have all the approved projects and direct services to be completed by the end of the year to help those in need. Some appropriations were reduced or stricken due to the need for further analysis and discussion. We look forward to leadership coming together to revisit these items and refine the funding proposals that will directly assist the Navajo people,” added President Nez,

“We commend the 24th Navajo Nation Council for their long hours of dedication, discussions, and hard work to move the legislation through the process.”

The total approved funding of \$476,666,192 represents approximately 72% approval of appropriated amounts. The remaining amount of \$175,313,214, along with the previous balance of \$1,150,000.37 of the CARES Fund, provides \$176,463,214.37 to create a second phase appropriation that will provide direct relief services to our People.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer stated that the second phase appropriation proposed plan would focus on immediate financial relief for Navajo individuals, families, and communities impacted by the pandemic. The proposal will include college student relief, hardship assistance for students, emergency assistance for Navajo members, elders and vulnerable individuals, propane and natural gas services for elders, immediate internet connectivity for families, additional solar projects, housing initiatives, and many more.

“As we visited all 110 communities within the Navajo Nation, we heard the challenges and pleas of our Navajo people. The coronavirus has emotionally, physically, spiritually, and financially impacted many families. Therefore, we continue to develop plans that will directly help our people. The Administration pledges our commitment to work with the Navajo Nation Council to quickly work on the second phase of CARES Act projects and getting more relief to our people,” said Vice President Lizer.

Ganado community to receive new senior citizens and veterans center

On Wednesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer signed into law Resolution CJY-57-20, which appropriates approximately \$1.4 million from the Navajo Nation's Síhasin Fund for the design and construction of a new 4,800 square-foot senior citizens and veterans center in the community of Ganado, Ariz. The ceremony was held outdoors with social distancing and COVID-19 prevention protocols in place.

"In a time of adversity and challenges brought upon the Navajo Nation by the COVID-19 pandemic, the approval of these funds inspires renewed hope within our communities and our Navajo people. Today, we celebrate a milestone for the community of Ganado. This new senior citizens and veterans center will not only provide services, but it will also be a place of healing. We were taught to take care of our parents, grandparents, and all of our elders and those are the teachings we must pass on to our young people. I congratulate the community of Ganado for working together to bring change for their people. This initiative took many years of hard work and perseverance to be where we are today," said President Nez.

Last year, President Nez and Vice President Lizer attended the Ganado community's elder day celebration, where they voiced their support for the construction of the new center to support services for elders and veterans. They were joined by Division of Community Development Executive Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman and Department of Health Executive Director Dr. Jill Jim during Wednesday's signing ceremony.

"We were here in Ganado several months back and we assured you then that the Nez-Lizer Administration would do everything we can to move this project forward. This new center will be the pride and joy of Ganado for many years to come and it will also strengthen and help to build the economy and the community.

Thank you to all of the veterans and elders who are with us today — you make us proud to be who we are and you are what makes us a strong people. We thank all of you for everything you have done for our Nation and our country. God bless all of you," said Vice President Lizer.

During the signing ceremony, local elders and veterans including Lók'aa' Niteel Veterans Organization Vice Commander Andrew Lynch, Isabelle Shondée, and Carolyn Holmes offered their words of encouragement and appreciation. Long-time Ganado resident and Gold Star Mother Carolyn Holmes, urged those in attendance to continue working together to make progress for all Navajo communities. Holmes, a grazing permit holder who allowed for 10-acres of land to be withdrawn within her grazing area for the project, also stated that other grazing permit holders should not stop projects from progressing especially when they benefit entire communities and many people.

Council Delegate Vince R. James, who represents the Ganado community as a member of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, sponsored the legislation that was eventually approved by the Council by a vote of 22-0 during the summer session on July 22, 2020. During the signing ceremony, he spoke about the years of dedication it took to develop the plans and secure the funds for the project. He also thanked the local grazing permit holders for allowing a 10-acre area of land to be designated for the project, which is located



nearly one-mile west of the Ganado Chapter house. The former senior center operated out of a modular home for years before it was ordered to close due to deficiencies with the structure of the facility. The new center will provide meeting rooms and space to provide services for local elders.

"Not only does this project symbolize hope, but it exemplifies the resiliency of our Navajo people. During a worldwide pandemic and public health emergency, we have local leaders who continue to move our communities forward and to inspire hope for our future generations. Thank you to the 24th Navajo Nation Council for their support and approval of the funds as well," added President Nez.

The funding for the project is separate from the Navajo Nation's CARES Act funds. On July 31, the 24th Navajo Nation Council approved a CARES Act expenditure plan, which will be considered by President Nez and Vice President Lizer once the resolution is finalized/certified by the Legislative Branch and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President.

Navajo Nation moves forward with hogan-style housing manufacturing facility

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer recently visited a newly-established housing manufacturing facility where the first Navajo hogan-style home is being constructed to serve as the prototype for the Nez-Lizer Adminis-

tration's housing development initiative to produce much-needed homes for Navajo families, veterans, elders, and others. Since being appointed to serve as the Executive Director of the Navajo Nation Veterans Adminis-

tration under the Nez-Lizer Administration last year, James D. Zwierlein has taken on the challenging task of developing and implementing housing manufacturing facilities on the Navajo Nation that can mass produce quality homes in a timely manner. The first site

located in Tse Bonito, N.M. was previously used as a lumber yard warehouse and has since been converted to a manufacturing facility that can produce one home a day with a small work crew.

“We envisioned having several housing manufacturing facilities on the Navajo Nation for several years. Now, we are seeing tremendous progress under Director Zwierlein and his staff members. The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the need for more housing for families. Currently, we have multiple generations living under one roof and that creates many issues and concerns during a public health emergency. With the federal CARES Act dollars, we are looking to use a portion of those funds to expand this housing initiative,” said President Nez.

The 1,200 square-foot prototype currently being constructed will have two-bedrooms, one bathroom, a kitchen, and a living room with the option of adding more bedrooms. The home will meet ADA accessibility standards as well. Under the plan, Zwierlein intends to hire Navajo veterans to construct the homes, including those with no carpentry experience who are willing to learn how to build homes.

In 2013, the 22nd Navajo Nation Council approved legislation sponsored by former Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd that amended the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Fund, to provide funding specifically for the construction of homes for Navajo veterans.

Each two-bedroom home will cost approximately \$130,000, which includes the costs of materials, labor, and transporting the homes out to communities. Zwierlein added that the cost of building

materials has increased over the years and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, prices have increased even more. The increased costs now require the program’s core legislation to be amended to reflect current costs of construction.

“We look to our Nation’s lawmakers to help make this housing initiative successful and beneficial to as many families as possible and that requires amending the existing legislation to make it more efficient. We also welcome all of the members of the Council to stop by the facility and see the progress that is being made. By working together, we can produce 10 to 15 homes per day if we are able to expand the current operation, hire enough workers, secure supplies and a large facility to operate from,” stated Vice President Lizer.

The housing manufacturing facility is modeled after the United Brotherhood of Carpenters’ International Training Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, which offers training through the Carpenters International Training Fund that is dedicated to job training and certification programs to increase the number of construction professionals. In August 2019, President Nez and Vice President Lizer visited the 1.2 million square-foot “world-class” International Training Center where



many members of the Navajo Nation participate in the program.

“It’s amazing to be a part of bringing a vision to life. My Grandfather taught me many years ago to measure twice, cut once. We have been measuring housing on the Nation for years. It’s high time we started cutting. This first cut is a thing to see. I cannot wait to deliver this first home to a veteran,” Zwierlein stated.

“We have many Navajo carpenters who can become employed through this initiative while also giving back to our Navajo people. For those with little to no carpentry experience, we are willing to give them the opportunity to learn as well. We look forward to seeing this housing program grow to provide homes for many Navajo families,” added President Nez.

Navajo Nation and Indian Health Service making progress with water points and safe water storage projects using CARES Act funds

In July 2020, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and officials with the Indian Health Service finalized a Memorandum of Agreement to allocate over \$5 million from the IHS appropriated Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to support the installation of up to 54 transitional water points, assistance with water fees, supply of up to 37,000 water storage containers, and up to 3.5 million doses of water disinfection tablets for residents living in homes with no piped water access for the duration of the Navajo Nation COVID-19 public health emergency. This large-scale effort is known as the Navajo Nation/IHS COVID-19 Water Access Mis-

sion.

On Tuesday, Navajo Area IHS reported that 52 transitional water points have been open to the public, increasing access to approximately 12,117 people living in homes with no piped water on the Navajo Nation. There are an additional seven transitional water points remaining that will serve an estimated 3,737 people. When all 59 transitional water points are open, the average travel distance for residents in these communities will be 17 miles round trip. This is a decrease of 35 miles per round trip, with an average drive time savings of 38 minutes.

“Getting water resources to our Navajo peo-

ple is one of our top priorities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this partnership between the Nation, Indian Health Service, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, and Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority, thousands of Navajo families now have access to more water sources closer to home. The CARES Act funds are being used and we are seeing the benefits,” said President Nez.

Additionally, Navajo Engineering Construction Authority is working with chapters to deliver an estimated 37,000, 5-gallon water storage containers for distribution by chapter at sites with existing permanent water points and newly installed transitional water points.

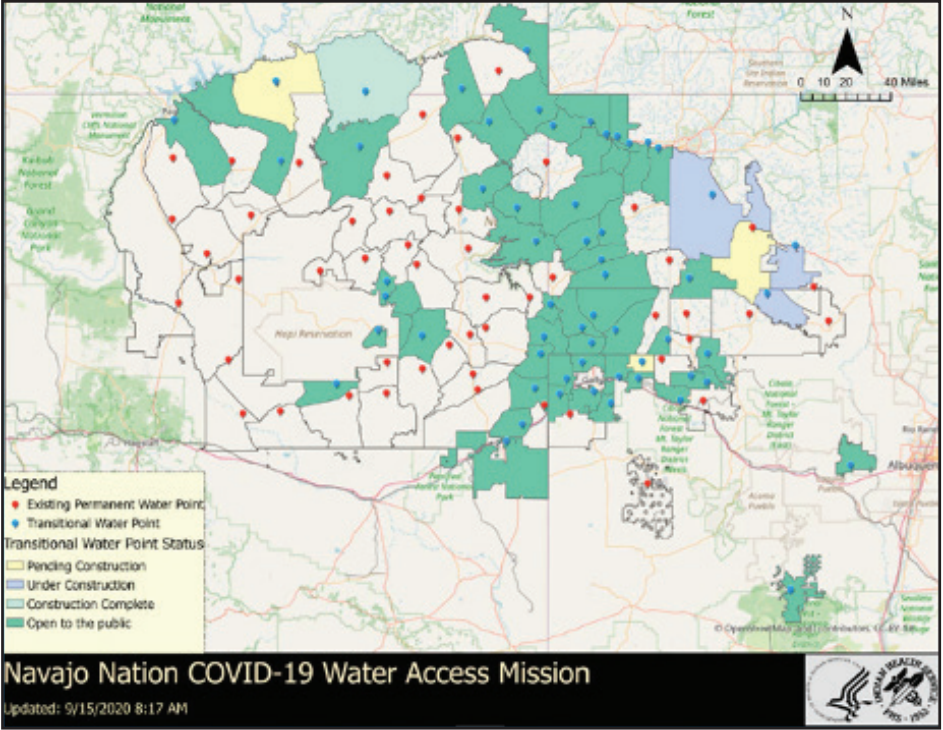
Once delivered, IHS will provide training to chapter officials on the distribution of the water storage containers. Additional training will be provided as needed for distribution of water disinfection tablets.

“The tremendous efforts being put forth each day contributes to more Navajo homes having access to clean water, which is a great need during this COVID-19 pandemic. We are hopeful that with increased access to water, families are not only able to increase domestic usage but also keep their families safer and healthy. We appreciate the hard work of all of the partners and we look forward to seeing more progress,” stated Vice President Lizer.

The partnership of these entities developed into a group called the Navajo Nation COVID-19 Water Access Coordination Group, co-led by IHS and the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, com-

prised of 21 partners from the Navajo Nation, federal, state partners, public health universities, and non-profit organizations that have been meeting on a regular basis to collaborate on emergency water access response actions and to develop long-term solutions to address the lack of home water access.

The Nez-Lizer Administration remains committed to working together with the Indian Health Service to complete these projects to provide water access for our Navajo people.



President Nez and Vice President Lizer proclaim “Navajo Nation Domestic Violence Awareness Month”

On Oct. 1, 2020, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer signed a proclamation to recognize the month of October as the “Navajo Nation Domestic Violence Awareness Month” to raise awareness and assert that Navajo families are entitled to a safe, healthy, stable, and loving environment.

The proclamation states that domestic violence is a wide-spread issue that affects many of our Navajo people, impacting our Diné way of life and culture and traditions. Domestic violence is a multi-generational family cycle, which disrupts many Diné families leaving an impact of long-term emotional, spiritual, psychological, and physical harm.


“Domestic violence was already an epidemic before the coronavirus, and it is alarming that the current health crisis has caused an increase in family violence and abuse across the country. On the other hand, we have also heard from many Navajo people who have reconciled with their loved ones during the pandemic. This month, our focus should be on providing help, comfort, and prayers for violence survivors and victims. Greater awareness, education, and intervention are greatly needed on the Nation. We ask our citizens to join us in sharing information and showing compassion that can help those who are experiencing violence during these uncertain times,” said President Nez.

The proclamation also recognizes that “the

Navajo Nation is taking a stand against domestic violence, family violence, dating violence, and sexual assaults through the Strengthening Families Program, Department of Family Services, and the Navajo Nation Division of Social Services.”

“By signing this proclamation, we call to action to bring attention to domestic violence and remind each other that there are countless victims, survivors, children, families, and communities impacted by violence. We need to pray and stand together to stop all abuse and get on the road to recovery, healing, and restoration,” said Vice President Lizer.

“In a survey sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, it states that 1 in 3 American Indians experiences domestic violence annually, which is absolutely unacceptable. Domestic violence is a choice, and we need to choose to return to our teachings and remember that we are a people of love and respect. Through this pandemic, I pray for our peoples’ safety, especially for those that might feel as if they are emotionally, physically, and mentally trapped. May the Navajo Nation see this proclamation as a stance against domestic violence,” said Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish.



THE NAVAJO NATION

Proclamation

RECOGNIZING NAVAJO NATION DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, all Navajo families are entitled to a safe, healthy, stable, and loving environment, which nurtures and protects each family member; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence is a wide-spread issue that affects many of our Navajo people, which impacts our Diné way of life, culture and traditions; domestic violence is a multi-generational family cycle, which disrupts many Diné families leaving an impact of long-term emotional, spiritual, psychological, and physical harm; and

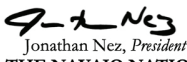
WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation is taking a stand against domestic violence, family violence, dating violence and sexual assaults through the Strengthening Families Program/Department of Family Services within the Division of Social Services; and

WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation will provide prevention and crisis intervention services for victims of domestic violence, family violence, dating violence and sexual assault in partnership with other federal, state, tribal, and non-profit agencies; and


WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation is committed to partnering with state and federal governmental agencies to prevent domestic violence, family violence, dating violence and sexual assault.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JONATHAN NEZ, President of the Navajo Nation and I, MYRON LIZER, Vice President of the Navajo Nation do hereby proclaim the month of October 2020 as the “Navajo Nation Domestic Violence Awareness Month” and urge the citizens of the Navajo Nation to support and bring awareness to the prevention of domestic violence, family violence, dating violence and sexual assault on the Navajo Nation.

PROCLAIMED THIS 1st DAY OF OCTOBER 2020



Jonathan Nez, President
THE NAVAJO NATION



Myron Lizer, Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION

According to the proclamation, the Navajo Nation will provide prevention and crisis intervention services for victims of domestic violence, family violence, dating violence, and sexual assault in partnership with other federal, state, tribal, and non-profit agencies.

Shiprock District Court issues temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction to stop Dineh Benally's hemp production immediately

Following a full day of testimony, cross-examination, and oral argument on Sept. 17, 2020, Shiprock District Court Judge Genevieve Woody granted the Navajo Nation's motion for a Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction to immediately stop defendant Dineh Benally's illegal hemp farming activities on Sept. 18, 2020

"We respect the ruling of the Shiprock District Court. The ruling allows our law enforcement officers to enforce the temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction to stop the production of hemp. We strongly urge everyone to respect the ruling of the court and move forward peacefully to ensure the safety of community members, police officers, and everyone in the impacted areas. Lastly, I commend the Navajo Nation Department of Justice and outside legal counsel for their commitment to this case."

In granting the motion, Judge Woody found that the Navajo Nation had met its burden by demonstrating (1) a protected right or interest and a high likelihood of success on the merits; (2) that irreparable harm to that right is likely to occur unless a preliminary injunction is issued; (3) that harm is substantial in nature; and (4) that the moving party had no other adequate remedy at law.

In ruling from the bench, Judge Woody cited to the testimony offered on behalf of the Navajo Nation

by both Navajo Nation government officials and the citizens and residents who have been directly impacted by Defendant Benally's illegal hemp farming.

The Navajo Nation filed this lawsuit on June 12, 2020 seeking to stop the illegal and unregulated growth, production, transporting, licensing, and selling industrial hemp within the exterior boundaries of the Navajo Nation. Defendants in the case are Dineh Benally, in his personal and official capacity, the Native American Agricultural Company and Navajo Gold Company, which are both controlled by Benally.

Defendant Benally began growing hemp without Navajo Nation's approval required by the 2018 Farm Bill and regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture. Despite his claims, Defendant Benally also does not have the required approval of the USDA for his hemp cultivation activities. The expansion of his operation to hundreds of acres complete with "man camps" for workers, massive growth facilities that include hundreds of greenhouses has drained law enforcement resources, caused clear environmental damage, and has created substantial disharmony in the Shiprock and surrounding communities. Benally has also employed aggressive security guards that have intimidated and threatened elders, kids, and other Navajo community members. Benally has also been charged with Aggravated Assault.

"I personally experienced the intimidation and threats of Dineh Benally's security in Shiprock while working in my official capacity in a clearly marked tribal vehicle, said Navajo Nation Attorney General Doreen N. McPaul. "I am incredibly pleased with the court's decision today, and on behalf of the Navajo Nation, I would like to offer sincere gratitude to the Nation's witnesses who came forward to testify in what an intense and confrontational case. We are also grateful to all the community members, neighbors, and farmers who reached out to share their own stories and information about the devastating impact of hemp cultivation activities on themselves, their families, and their property," said President Nez.

The Court's action makes clear what the Navajo Nation leadership has made clear each time hemp legislation has been considered – that it is illegal on the lands of the Navajo Nation unless specifically authorized and cultivated under a properly regulated system. To date, the Navajo Nation has not approved tribal regulations for hemp cultivation nor has it submitted a hemp production plan to the USDA for approval.

The Navajo Nation is represented in this case by Charlie Galbraith and Krystalyn Kinsel of Jenner & Block, both are enrolled members of the Navajo Nation.

Nation's leaders and Gaming Enterprise mark the grand opening of Navajo Blue Travel Center

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and 24th Navajo Nation Council members gathered on Sept. 18, to mark the grand opening of the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise's new 9,000 square-foot "Navajo Blue Travel Center," located next to Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort near Flagstaff, Ariz.

In July 2016, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council approved legislation sponsored by former Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie, adopting the Síhasin Fund Twin Arrows Travel Center Development Expenditure Plan to provide funding for the project. During the construction

phase, the project created 200 jobs and with the start of the new venture an additional 47 workers will be employed full-time.

"The opening of the new Navajo Blue Travel Center is part of a broader vision for our communities, it represents our goal of Nation building. Creating jobs and stable incomes for Navajo families is part of the foundation for strengthening our communities and inspiring hope in our Navajo people. I commend the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise Board of Directors, Chairman Quincy Natay, and CEO Brian Parrish for their persistence and dedication. Over the last few years,

they had to clear several hurdles to reach this point. They are practicing the teaching of our elders known as T'áá hwó'ajít'éego, or self-reliance and self-determination, while also providing a great learning experience for our young Navajo professionals who were part of the development of the Navajo Blue Travel Center. Navajo Blue will be a great destination for visitors and our Navajo people," said President Nez, who also thanked the Navajo Nation Council and former President Russell Begaye for approving the funds.

The Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise's "Let's Build the Business" Job Training Program utilized the

expertise and creativity of young Navajo professionals from various colleges and universities, including Diné College, Navajo Technical University, Arizona State University, University of Arizona, Duke University, in the planning, design, construction, and marketing phases.

“This is a great venture for the Navajo people and for our economy in terms of jobs, revenue, and the tourism industry. We believe in our young Navajo people and we are proud of their contributions to this initiative. When we work together, great things happen. I also want to commend the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise for everything they have done for all of their employees, and their families, throughout this entire COVID-19 pandemic. This is a remarkable accomplishment for the entire Nation. Buy Navajo, Build Navajo,” said Vice President Lizer.

The Navajo Blue Travel includes a gas station, convenience store, shower and laundry facilities and parking for semi-truck drivers, and a wide variety of food and beverage options including Navajo Beef and a new line of products such as “Navajo Fizz” soda being introduced by the Gaming Enterprise. The design and construction of the travel center also reflects Navajo culture and architecture.

“In addition to creating valuable jobs, Navajo Blue will allow guests of the Nation to enjoy an all-new dining and retail experience that can’t be found any-

where else along the I-40 corridor. This includes a fire pit to slow-roast premium-grade Navajo beef that is prepared a number of different ways to suit your unique tastes and preferences,” said NNGE Interim CEO Brian Parrish.

Former Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie was also in attendance to offer his support and appreciation. As a member of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council, Tsosie sponsored the legislation to secure funding for the project and also served as chair of the Síhasin Fund Subcommittee. He recognized and thanked past and present leaders and attorneys for supporting the Nation’s lawsuit against the federal government over the mismanagement of trust assets, which led to a \$554 million settlement that helped to provide funds for the travel center.

“It’s due to the foresight of past leaders and our attorneys such as Dana Bobroff and others that we were able to receive the \$554 million settlement and establish the Síhasin Fund,” said Tsosie.



During Friday’s opening ceremony, the Bird Springs Color Guard posted the colors, NNGE Executive Director of Government Affairs Phefelia Bradley served as the mistress of ceremony, the National Anthem and Navajo Flag Song was sung by Annabelle Smallcanyon, and the invocation was offered by Leupp Chapter President Valerie Kelly. 24th Navajo Nation Council members Thomas Walker, Jr., Mark Freeland, Otto Tso, Nathaniel Brown, and Pernell Halona, and Gaming Enterprise also offered remarks during the opening ceremony.



STAY
HOME
STAY
SAFE
SAVE
LIVES